


Jillaine Thomson


Town of the Blue Mountains
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April 24th, 2024

RE: CSOPS.24.018

Deputation Request, April 30th Committee of the Whole

Dear Madame Chair and Councillors:

As a 26-year resident of Peel St South, I am highly in favor of the development of much needed long-term care and living residences for seniors. I never anticipated that the 125 Peel Street project would morph into such a large residential and commercial project that would deeply affect the residents of Peel Street South. As more information comes to light, there are many aspects of this proposed development that do not add up and appear to go unanswered. In summation, the proposed alterations and my associated concerns include:

Transparency and Accountability:

The Campus of Care is Thornbury's most ambitious and largest commercial development to date. This high-density development includes impactful initiatives that will significantly alter the rural character of Thornbury and will no doubt set a precedent for the town's future development.

- I would argue that the adoption of a CIHA for this project has been used to expediently advance key initiatives (ie. multiple 5-storey buildings; attainable housing in the form of multi-unit mid-rise residential buildings; commercial businesses) that would have ordinarily required a vigorous approval process.
- These initiatives were likely to have been met with pushback from a significant number of town residents. Adoption of the CIHA evaded the due consideration that should have ordinarily been afforded to ratepayers. This assumption is further backed by the fact that CIHAs have recently caused a lot of consternation in the province and in rural municipalities, as evidenced by the provincial government's proposed repeal of the Community Infrastructure and Housing Accelerator as introduced by Bill 23. A lack of adequate discussion and consensus building serves to erode confidence in local governments.

Proposed Alterations to Peel Street South to service new Campus of Care Community:

From the information provided at the Services and Cross Sections PIC, it appears that Campus of Care development is wholly dependent on a major reconstruction of Peel Street South.

- I question the feasibility of the significant alterations proposed for Peel Street South in consideration of the fact that the adjacent properties to 125 Peel are zoned as "Future Secondary Planning" in the Official Town Plan of 2016.
- Such significant alterations seem premature and irresponsible in the absence of any formal studies and research that would guide the vision for the future of this 'secondary planning' area. If any documentation has been prepared on the Council's part that provides an Official Plan for

this area, I would welcome evidence to the contrary. Unless of course, the CIHA was once again used to bypass the standard approval procedures outlined in the Towns Official Plan.

- At this point in time, any discussion or proposals for Peel Street South reconstruction work (such as infrastructure, services, traffic) seem to be a moot point until there is clarity in regards to the 'future secondary planning' official documentation.

Traffic Impact and Safety Issues:

Highway 26 is an increasingly busy and potentially dangerous provincial highway as evidenced by the occurrence of several major and fatal accidents in past years, therefore vehicular and pedestrian traffic solutions should be carefully considered. Unless I am mistaken, the Transportation Master Plan is not sufficient to address any traffic planning studies or solutions that involve Highway 26.

- The high volume of traffic that will be generated by the Compass of Care will potentially create safety issues at the intersections of Peel St. South and Hwy 26 due to the increased volume of traffic and a multi-use trail that will cross the highway to connect to the existing Georgian Trail. Will an MTO study be completed to address the feasibility of the future proposed roundabout? It seems precipitous to even consider a roundabout without such a study.
- The high volume of traffic that will be generated by the Compass of Care will also potentially create safety issues at the intersection of Hwy 10 and Hwy 26. This intersection is already potentially dangerous to navigate due to the volume of traffic entering/exiting Goldsmiths in peak traffic volume months. With the substantial increase in vehicular traffic from the new developments of Lora Greens and the Campus of Care, the risk will increase exponentially. An independent study by the developer of Lora Greens does not appear to consider the increased traffic generated by the Campus of Care. As per the above, will an MTO study be completed to address these risks and to offer effective and safe traffic solutions?
- Due to the comparatively short distance between these two intersections, how might the possible necessity for traffic lights and/or roundabouts at both intersections ultimately impact traffic flow and congestion. As far as I am aware, this is another issue that has not been addressed.
- In light of the above issues and in absence of more intensive studies, it seems premature to propose two entrance/exit ways onto Peel South from the Campus of Care and to designate Peel Street South as the main thoroughfare for Campus of Care traffic.

Impact on Peel Street South Residents:

The Campus of Care initiatives has thus far illustrated a blatant disregard for Peel South residents and fail to protect and accommodate the needs of these property owners in any notable manner. I feel I can confidently speak for my fellow neighbors, when I say that the new development has unexpectedly thrust an extraordinary financial and emotional burden upon us that negatively impacts our quality of life. Consider the following untenable situation which we have been forced upon us:

- Remaining in our homes means foregoing all the reasons that attracted us to a rural neighborhood (peace, nature, small neighborhood) as we face the prospect of multiple major disruptions, loss of privacy, removal of our tree lines, possible expropriation of our property, noise over an extended period and the intrusion of multi-story dwellings abutting or within close vicinity to our properties.
- Since we are deemed as a "future secondary planning" area with no Official Plan, we are severely restricted in any options we might have to encourage serious buyers and dispense of our properties. We cannot build a new home on our properties, we cannot sever our properties, we cannot sell to a commercial developer without rezoning (which would never be approved of

by the Town). Finally, private sale to a residential buyer is highly unlikely due to the impending construction unless it is a sale offer far below market value. In short, our hands are literally tied.

- To further dehumanize us, the bulk of the town's documented references to the Peel Street South properties are consistently referred to as 'future secondary planning area', with a noticeable absence of reference to the word "residents". Despite our small numbers, we are still ratepayers who should be afforded the same due consideration as residents of more substantial communities.

Sincerely Yours,

Jillaine Thomson